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# Claims

1 (Currently amended). Retainer apparatus for holding conduits in a trench having a bottom and a pair of sides comprising in combination:

a center bridge portion to be disposed against the conduits in the trench and ;

a pair of end plates secured to the center bridge portion and disposed against the sides of the trench , including barbs extending outwardly and upwardly from the end plates ;

a boss on each end plate extending outwardly from the end plates for receiving the bridge; and

means for securing the end plates to the sides of the trench.

2 (Canceled).

3 (Canceled ).

4 (Canceled).

5 (Currently amended). The apparatus of claim [[3]] 1 in which the barbs are in the configuration of louvers.

6 (Original). The apparatus of claim 5 in which the barbs are disposed generally parallel to each other.

7(Canceled).

8 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1 in which the end plates are generally of a rectangular configuration.

9 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1 in which the end plates include apertures.

10 (Original). The apparatus of claim 9 which includes spikes extending through the apertures for anchoring the end plates in non-cohesive soil.

11 (Original). The apparatus of claim 1 in which the center bridge portion comprises a single member.

12 (Original). The apparatus of claim 11 in which the center bridge portion has a generally circular cross section.

13(Canceled).

14 (Canceled).

15(Canceled).

16 (Canceled).

17(Canceled).

18(Canceled).

19(Canceled).

20(Canceled).

21(Canceled).

22(Canceled).

23(Currently amended). The apparatus of claim [[2]] 1 in which the trench includes non-cohesive soil and the means for securing the pair of end plates to the sides of the trench includes apertures in the end plates and relatively long fastening elements extending through the apertures and into the non-cohesive soil.

24(Canceled).

25(Canceled).

26(Canceled).

27(Canceled).

28(Canceled).

29(Canceled).

30(Canceled).

31(Canceled).

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32(Canceled).

33(Canceled).

34 (Currently amended). End plate apparatus to be secured to a wall of a trench for retaining at least a single conduit in the trench comprising in combination:

an end plate having at least a single barb element extending upwardly and outwardly from the end plate and adapted to extend into the wall of the trench ;

a boss extending outwardly from the end plate opposite to the barb element and adapted to receive a bridge element to be disposed on at least the single conduit disposed in the trench; and

means for securing the end plate to the wall of the trench.

35 (Previously amended).The apparatus of claim 34 in which the means for securing the end plate to the wall of the trench includes at least a single aperture extending through the end plate for receiving a spike.

36 (canceled).

37 (Canceled).

38 (Currently amended). The apparatus of claim ~~[[37]]~~ 34 in which the barb element is in the configuration of a louver.

39 (New). A method of retaining conduits in a trench having a bottom and a pair of walls comprising the steps of:

providing a pair of end plates;

securing the end plates to the walls of the trench adjacent to the conduits;

providing a bridge element;

placing the bridge element over the conduits; and

securing the bridge element to the end plates.

40 (New). The method of claim 39 in which the step of providing a pair of end plates includes the step of providing a boss on each end plate to receive the bridge element.

41 (New). The method of claim 39 in which the step of providing a pair of end plates includes the step of providing a barb element extending upwardly and outwardly from the end plates.

42 (New). The method of claim 41 in which the barb elements are in the configuration of a louver.